

Message Text

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14
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

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APPROVED BY EUR:JGLOWENSTEIN
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R 150027Z JUL 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 174753

EXDIS FOR AMBASSADOR SILBERMAN ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, LE SY, YO

SUBJECT: HABIB - BELOVSKI MEETING, JUNE 23

REF: (A) STATE 168402

1. REGRET THAT REFTEL MISTAKENLY TRANSMITTED UNCLEARED
TEXT OF MEMCON OF SUBJECT MEETING. APPROVED MEMCON
FOLLOWS:

2. AMBASSADOR BELOVSKI SAID THAT THE YUGOSLAVS HAVE
RECENTLY BEEN INVOLVED IN THE LEBANESE CRISIS THROUGH
THE ARAFAT-TITO EXCHANGE OF MESSAGES, FOREIGN MINISTER
MINIC'S VISIT TO DAMASCUS, AND A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESI-
DENT OF IRAQ. BASED ON MINIC'S VISIT, THE YUGOSLAV
LEADERSHIP DECIDED THAT THE LEBANESE SITUATION IS WORSE
THAN THEY THOUGHT, IS UNFAVORABLE FOR THE STATUS OF THE
PLO, AND RISKS COMPROMISING SYRIA'S INTERNATIONAL POSITION.

THE SITUATION CAN BE IMPROVED IF THE PLO AND THE SYRIANS
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REESTABLISH A RELATIONSHIP OF CONFIDENCE IN ORDER TO

COOPERATE ON LEBANON AND THE MIDDLE EAST ISSUE. PERHAPS THE ARAB LEAGUE DECISIONS WILL SERVE AS A BASIS FOR SOLVING THE LEBANESE PROBLEM, PROVIDING THERE ARE FORCES CAPABLE OF CARRYING IT OUT. ARAB LEAGUE FORCES CAN BE A GREAT HELP IN PREVENTING THE ENGAGEMENT OF A SUPERPOWER.

THE YUGOSLAV LEADERSHIP IS OPPOSED TO ANY KIND OF MILITARY INTERVENTION, EITHER SYRIAN OR ISRAELI. MINIC MET PLO NATIONAL COUNCIL PRESIDENT KALID FAHUM IN DAMASCUS, AND FOUND THAT FAHUM FAVORS RAPPROCHEMENT WITH SYRIA.

3. YUGOSLAV POLICY IS NOW FOCUSSED ON:

--- STIMULATING SYRIAN-PLO CONTACTS;

--- CONTRIBUTING TO IMPROVING DAMASCUS-CAIRO UNDERSTANDING;

--- SUPPORTING THE ARAB LEAGUE DECISION, AND INSISTING THAT LEBANESE REPRESENTATIVES BE INCLUDED IN ARAB LEAGUE DECISIONS;

--- OPPOSING ANY INTERFERENCE BY SUPER-POWERS, FEELING THE FINAL SOLUTION SHOULD BE LEFT TO THE LEBANESE;

--- SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO SOLVE THE PRESENT CRISIS ON A BASIS PRESERVING THE INDEPENDENCE AND INTEGRITY OF LEBANON;

--- SUPPORTING THE PALESTINIANS (THE PLO) AGAINST ANY EFFORT TO UNDERMINE THEIR POSITION.

IN THE EXCHANGE OF MESSAGES BETWEEN TITO AND ARAFAT, TITO ADVISED THE PLO TO FIND WAYS TO REACH AN UNDERSTANDING WITH SYRIA. IN RESPONSE TO IRAQI PRESIDENT BAKR'S MESSAGE TO TITO, THE YUGOSLAVS EXPLAINED THEIR POSITION TO THE IRAQI MINISTER OF PLANNING. THEY POINTED OUT THE DANGERS WHICH ALL ARAB COUNTRIES FACE IF THE LEBANESE SITUATION IS NOT SOLVED. THE IRAQI MINISTER SAID IRAQ CONSIDERS THERE IS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR WAR WITH ISRAEL IF THE UN IS SUCCESSFUL IN FREEING OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. THE YUGOSLAVS
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THINK THIS SHOWS A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN THE IRAQI ATTITUDE TOWARD ISRAEL, ALTHOUGH THEY RECOGNIZE THAT THIS INTERPRETATION MIGHT BE WRONG. THE YUGOSLAVS URGED THE IRAQIS TO TAKE NO ACTION ON THEIR SIDE (PRESUMABLY AGAINST SYRIA).

SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASAD WILL PROBABLY VISIT BELGRADE NEXT WEEK.

4. MR. HABIB SAID IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO LEARN WHAT ASAD SAYS DURING HIS VISIT TO BELGRADE SINCE MUCH HAS CHANGED. AS FOR THE YUGOSLAV OBJECTIVES--LETTING THE LEBANESE SETTLE THEIR OWN AFFAIRS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A UNIFIED LEBANON--OUR POSITION IS CLEAR AND CONSISTENT

WITH THAT. AS TO SYRIA'S ROLE IN LEBANON, ONE MUST CONSIDER THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND. WE ARE IN A PHASE OF ASSESSING HOW MUCH OF A ROLE SYRIA WILL LET THE ARAB LEAGUE PLAY. THERE IS NO INDICATION WHETHER SYRIA WILL MAKE A SUBSTANTIAL WITHDRAWAL. SO FAR THE ARAB LEAGUE FORCE CONSISTS OF ONLY 200 LIBYANS AND SOME SYRIANS AT BEIRUT AIRPORT. MEANWHILE THERE IS HEAVY FIRE BETWEEN THE PALESTINIANS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS AND THE CHRISTIANS IN BEIRUT. IRAQI TROOPS ARE STILL MASSED ON THE SYRIAN BORDER WITH SYRIA MAKING IT CLEAR THAT IT WOULD RESIST ANY ADVANCE. THE YUGOSLAV ADVICE TO THE IRAQIS WAS GOOD. WE WILL CONSIDER THE YUGOSLAV'S INTERPRETATION OF THE IRAQI POSITION ON THE MIDDLE EAST.

5. MEANWHILE THE SYRIAN-PLO CONFRONTATION IS VERY INTENSE. THERE IS A CONFLICT BETWEEN THE PLO AND BOTH SYRIAN AND SAIQA FORCES. ALLUDING TO THE YUGOSLAV SUPPORT FOR A SYRIA-PLO DIALOGUE, MR. HABIB MENTIONED THAT LIBYAN PRIME MINISTER JALLOUD HAS BEEN TRYING TO ESTABLISH A DIALOGUE WITHOUT SUCCESS. THE SYRIANS MAY NOT BE READY; THEY MAY FIRST WANT TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS NO PALESTINIAN-CONTROLLED GOVERNMENT IN LEBANON.

6. REGARDING THE SUPER-POWERS IN LEBANON, HABIB AGREED WITH THE AMBASSADOR'S POINT, SAYING THAT WE HAVE NO INTEREST IN INVOLVING OURSELVES MILITARILY IN LEBANON, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND WE DO NOT THINK THE SOVIETS DO EITHER. BUT IF THEY DID WE WOULD VIEW IT VERY SERIOUSLY. THE MOVES WE MADE OVER THE WEEKEND WERE SOLELY AIMED AT SUPPORTING THE EVACUATION OF AMERICAN CITIZENS. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED WHAT THE OBSTACLE HAD BEEN TO THE QUADRIPARTITE (EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN-SAUDI-KUWAITI) MEETING. MR. HABIB SAID THAT THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND IS SUCH THAT PEOPLE HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO MEET UNTIL THEY KNOW HOW IT WILL COME OUT. THERE IS NO GENERAL AGREEMENT ON THE STATUS OF THE PLO IN LEBANON. THE STEPS TAKEN THUS FAR--THE ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH A CEASE-FIRE AND BRING IN AN ARAB LEAGUE FORCE--ARE STEPS IN THE DIRECTION OF SOME ARRANGEMENT, BUT ARE NOT SUFFICIENT YET. EVERYONE IS RELUCTANT TO TAKE BIG STEPS.

7. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED ABOUT GISCARD'S OFFER. MR. HABIB REPLIED THAT IF THE ARABS WOULD ALL ACCEPT, WE WOULD NOT OPPOSE; IF PEOPLE WANT TO COME TO A MEETING, WE WOULD NOT OPPOSE. BUT THE CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE NOT YET DEVELOPED TO THAT STAGE. INTERMEDIARIES STILL NEED TO DEVELOP SOMETHING WHICH THE PARTIES ARE WILLING TO DISCUSS. THE U.S.

IS NOT DEEPLY INVOLVED, BUT IT SUPPORTS CERTAIN PRINCIPLES:

--- -- THE INTEGRITY OF LEBANON,
--- -- THE LEBANESE THEMSELVES MUST MEET
--- TOGETHER,
--- -- THERE SHOULD BE NO BIG POWER
--- INVOLVEMENT.

WE HAVE NOT BEEN TELLING THE SYRIANS TO GO INTO LEBANON, BUT THERE THEY ARE.

8. AMBASSADOR BELOVSKI SAID THAT YUGOSLAVIA CANNOT SUPPORT FOREIGN INTERVENTION ON PRINCIPLE. IF INTERVENTION IS ALLOWED IN ONE PLACE, IT CAN HAPPEN IN OTHERS. MR. HABIB COMMENTED, IN PASSING, THAT WE TRIED TO SUPPORT THIS PRINCIPLE IN ANGOLA, WHERE THERE WAS A CUBAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, FOR THE PRINCIPLE IS THE SAME. WE WOULD HOPE THAT GOVERNMENTS THAT BELIEVE IN THIS PRINCIPLE WOULD STEP FORWARD AND DEFEND IT CONSISTENTLY. IN LEBANON WE ALSO DO NOT
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FAVOR THE USE OF EXTERNAL FORCE, BUT THE ONLY THING WHICH CAN TAKE ITS PLACE IS A PHASED MOVE OF THE ARAB LEAGUE FORCE WHILE THE LEBANESE SIT DOWN TOGETHER. IN PRINCIPAL THRUST, OUR POSITION IS NOT GREATLY DIFFERENT FROM THE YUGOSLAVS'. WE WILL TAKE THE RESULTS OF YUGOSLAVIA'S CONTACTS INTO ACCOUNT, AND WILL BE INTERESTED IN WHAT DEVELOPS DURING THE ASAD VISIT TO YUGOSLAVIA.

9. THE AMBASSADOR COMMENTED THAT YUGOSLAVIA IS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED OVER SYRIA'S POSITION--IT IS EASY TO GET IN, BUT HARD TO GET OUT. TO LEAVE, SYRIA REQUIRES AN ARAB LEAGUE UMBRELLA. MR. HABIB SAID THE SYRIANS SEEM TO BE THINKING IN THAT DIRECTION, PROVIDED SYRIA KEEPS A DOMINANT ROLE. THERE IS ALSO A CHRISTIAN OBJECTION TO THE INCLUSION OF ALGERIAN FORCES; PERHAPS ALSO IN DEFERENCE TO THEIR CONCERNS, THE NUMBER OF LIBYAN TROOPS APPEAR TO BE SMALL.

10. THE AMBASSADOR COMMENTED THAT ARAFAT AND THE PALESTINIANS HAD TURNED TO MOSCOW AFTER SADAT'S BREAK WITH THE SOVIETS, BUT MORE RECENTLY HAD BECOME CLOSER TO CAIRO. ON THE MIDDLE EAST ISSUE THE YUGOSLAVS SUPPORT WITHDRAWAL

FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS, AND INTEGRITY AND GUARANTEED BORDERS FOR ALL STATES INCLUDING ISRAEL. HABIB SAID THAT THE PLO NEEDS TO INDICATE SOME ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS. WE CAN WAIT; IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE NOW. THE AMBASSADOR MENTIONED THAT EARLIER, WHEN AN INFORMAL GENEVA MEETING WAS BEING CONSIDERED, HE HAD SUGGESTED TO MR.

SISCO THAT THE CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE CONFERENCE AGREE ON GUIDELINES WHICH COULD EMBODY AN UNSPOKEN MUTUAL RECOGNITION BY THE PLO AND ISRAEL. SUCH A FORMULA COULD BE ANNOUNCED BY THE CHAIRMAN AND WOULD AVOID ANY ONE-SIDED PLO OR ISRAELI STATEMENTS. MR. HABIB COMMENTED THAT WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO ARAB SOLIDARITY AS A CONSEQUENCE OF LEBANON WILL AFFECT ATTITUDES THROUGHOUT THE MIDDLE EAST. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE174753
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RAMOSHER:DJW
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760272-0791
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760755/aaaabvwy.tel
Line Count: 239
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY, EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY, EXDIS
Reference: 76 STATE 168402
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 MAY 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <01 SEP 2004 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HABIB - BELOVSKI MEETING, JUNE 23
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, LE, SY, YO, US, (HABIB, PHILIP C), (BELOVSKI)
To: BELGRADE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006